

OPERA REVIEW

Opera strikes balance in 'Bruschino'

Spring season opens with energetic farce

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Gioachino Rossini's "Il signor Bruschino," which opens the Sarasota Opera's spring season, is an energetic farce that kept its balance under unusual circumstances during Friday's opening performance.

For the first time in 52 years, artistic director and conductor Victor DeRenzi was unable to take the podium. The audience was assured that DeRenzi, who recently marked his 800th performance with the company, will be back to conduct next week.

It would be the greatest compliment to DeRenzi to note that the performance continued without a hitch. Under the direction of assistant conductor Geoffrey Loff, making his Sarasota debut this season, the orchestra sounded as polished as usual with notable solos from both English and French horns.

The singers, most of whom are veterans of Sarasota Opera seasons past, carry out their roles with consummate skill pointing to the fact that the largest share of work for both conductor and stage director is done prior to the first performance.

Stephanie Sundine has always shown great skill directing large farces and plenty of action on stage. The small cast of "Bruschino" has its own challenges twisting and turning around the deception plotted by lovers Florville (Christopher Bozeka) and Sofia (Hanna Brammer).

Both Bozeka and Brammer have voices well suited to the lyric beauty of Rossini's smooth bel canto style. The two were paired in "L'inganno felice" earlier in the season and sing well together. Their first love duet here was as sentimental as any between an ardent tenor and his sweet soprano maid. What follows, however, is heavy on visual comedy and strong character acting from the rest of the cast.

Bass-baritone Stefano de Peppo seems born to comic roles as he is as adept here as he was in "La serva padrona" earlier in the season. His Guadenzio is intent on marrying his charge, Sofia, to the son of Signor Bruschino with whom he spends much of his time verbally wrestling. While de Peppo's character has his comedic flair, it is a straight role in comparison to Alexander Boyd's crochety, complaining and quite direct Bruschino.



From left, Hanna Brammer, Christopher Bozeka, Stefano de Peppo, Alexander Boyd and Joshua DeVane in the Sarasota Opera production of "Il signor Bruschino." PHOTOS PROVIDED BY ROO MILLINGTON/SARASOTA OPERA



Christopher Bozeka as Florville and Hanna Brammer as Sofia in the Sarasota Opera production of Rossini's "Il signor Bruschino."

It is great fun watching the two musically and comedically duel over the identity of Florville posing as the younger Bruschino. Rossini is testing the two with a tongue-twisting libretto at increasing speeds. This touch appears on several occasions in later ensembles

and is a classic Rossini device.

Another comedic pairing is Florville and the innkeeper Filiberto, portrayed with a bowlegged gait by Joshua DeVane. Motivated by money alone, DeVane's innkeeper unwittingly goes along with the deception only to later

'Il signor Bruschino'

By Gioachino Rossini. Conducted by Geoffrey Loff. Directed by Stephanie Sundine. Reviewed Friday, Sarasota Opera House, 61 N. Pineapple Ave., Sarasota. Through April 24. Streaming will be available in May. For ticket information: 941-328-1300; sarasotaopera.org

unravel it.

The lovely Sofia sings persuasively to the elder Bruschino in a spectacular aria that ranges from sweet pleading to increasing coloratura emphasis. It shows a glimpse of Brammer's vocal artistry, but our audiences have heard her excel under much greater demands.

Although this little farce is an early work for Rossini, his full ensemble scenes show his quick mastery of the quartets and quintets that would become a mainstay of Romantic era opera. Only here, where multiple moving parts are battling and pulling at each other, we hear hints of instability. While nothing ran off the rails, there was a sense of synchronicity teetering on the edge, which added to the thrill.

The entertaining production proves what a great team DeRenzi has assembled.

OBITUARIES

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Jaquette, Judith E.

May 29, 1941 - Mar 24, 2021

Judith E. Jaquette, 79, entered her eternal rest on March 24, 2021, surrounded by her family in her home in Venice, Florida. Judy was born May 29, 1941, in Chicago to Richard M. and Edna V. (nee Johnson) Olsen. As a teen, she moved to Glen Rock, NJ where she graduated from high school. She attended Muhlenberg College in Allentown, PA where she met the love of her life, Arthur and Judy married on November 25, 1961. They moved around the Midwest raising 3 girls, Cheryl, Michelle, and Julie, before moving to Venice, Florida in 2003.

Judy loved spending her time with her family. She was an active member of Emmanuel Lutheran Church on Venice Island. She played golf with the Plantation Ladies 9 hole league. She enjoyed traveling with Art, reading, crafting and volunteer work, most recently at The Venice Little Theater.

Judy was preceded in death by her parents Richard M. & Edna V. Olsen and a Brother-in-Law Donald W. Hanson. Judy is survived by her husband, Arthur B. Jaquette, 3 daughters Cheryl (Roger), Michelle (Jim), and Julie (Steve), 5 Grandchildren: 5 Great Grandchildren and 3 Sisters Lee, Jacquie, and Marlene. She will be greatly missed by all family.

In place of flowers please make memorial donations to Tidewell Hospice of Venice and Emmanuel Lutheran Church Venice.

Burgess, Kimberly Ann (Bryant)

Jan 1, 1979 - Feb 2, 2021

Kimberly A. Burgess, 42, of Fayetteville, N.C., grew up in the Sarasota / Bradenton area and moved to Fayetteville in Feb. 2019. Kim left her earthly life on February 2, 2021. She is now sharing eternity with her previously deceased mother, Cynthia A. Bryant.

Kim was born on January 1, 1979 to Cynthia A. and Mark D. Bryant. She attended Pine View School. Kim was married to Scott Burgess on September 17, 2004. Kim and Scott spent 16 wonderful years together. Kim enjoyed painting, sketching, and art work, listening to music, playing board games, working with children, and walking in the mountains. Kim loved animals, nature, writing, and most of all loved spending time with her family and friends.

Kim is survived by her husband, Scott; her father, Mark; stepmother, Cindy L. Bryant; two brothers, Michael and Christopher; and two step-sisters, Kristin Lally and Carrie Haynes.

Donations in Kim's memory can be made to St. Jude Children's Research Hospital or the ASPCA.

Chacon, Leandro Julian

Jun 19, 1955 - Apr 1, 2021

Leandro Julian Chacon, 65, of North Port, FL, died on Apr 1, 2021. Funeral arrangements by: Your Traditions Cremation and Funeral Chapel.

Summers, Michael

Apr 2, 2021

Michael J. Summers, 70, CPD Ret., passed away in Venice, Florida, on April 2, 2021. He was born to John and Catherine Summers in Evanston, Illinois.

He was predeceased by his parents and his son, Thomas.

He is survived by his loving wife, Connie, his son, Patrick (Sandie), grandchildren, Evan and Eryn, a sister, Mary Joan Byrne (Kevin). He was the fond uncle of many nieces and nephews. He will be missed by all who knew him.

A memorial mass will be held at Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Church, April 13, 2021 at 10 a.m. Inurnment to follow in Venice Memorial Gardens.

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations can be given to the charity of your choice.

Please visit his online guestbook at: www.farleyfuneralhome.com

Parker, Hurschel V.

Nov 6, 1939 - Apr 5, 2021

Hurschel V. Parker, 81, of Sarasota, FL, died on Apr 5, 2021. Funeral arrangements by: Your Traditions Cremation and Funeral Chapel.



Price, Patricia

Oct 20, 1936 - Mar 25, 2021

Patricia Price, 84, of Bradenton, FL, died on Mar 25, 2021. Funeral arrangements by: Shannon Funeral Homes Town Chapel. www.shannonfuneralhomes.com



Gautier, Donna L.

Dec 1, 1942 - Apr 1, 2021

Donna L. Gautier, 78, of Nokomis, Florida, died on Apr 1, 2021. Services will be held at 11:30AM on Tuesday, April 20, 2021 at Farley Funeral Home in Venice. A memorial gathering will take place from 10:00am-12:00pm. Interment will follow at Palms Memorial Park in Sarasota. Funeral arrangements by: Farley Funeral Home in Venice.

Osment, Lahoma Jean

Dec 26, 1956 - Apr 4, 2021

Lahoma Jean Osment, 64, of Sarasota, FL, died on Apr 4, 2021. Funeral arrangements by: Your Traditions Cremation and Funeral Chapel.



Califore, Gertrude

Oct 24, 1923 - Mar 30, 2021

Gertrude Califore, 97, of Punta Gorda, Florida, died on Mar 30, 2021. Services will be held at 3:00 pm on Apr 16, 2021 at Sarasota Memorial Park. Funeral arrangements by: Robert Toole and Sons Funeral Home at Palms Memorial Park.

Reyes, Julio

Jan 9, 1983 - Mar 28, 2021

Julio Reyes, 38, of Bradenton, FL, died on Mar 28, 2021. Funeral arrangements by: Shannon Funeral Homes Town Chapel. www.shannonfuneralhomes.com



Ferry, Ronald Roy

Oct 14, 1937 - Mar 27, 2021

Ronald Roy Ferry, 83, of Sarasota, FL, died on Mar 27, 2021. Funeral arrangements by: Your Traditions Cremation and Funeral Chapel.



Hirsch, Beri Rippa

Jul 14, 1922 - Mar 28, 2021

Beri Rippa Hirsch, 98, of Tampa, FL, died on Mar 28, 2021. Funeral arrangements by: Your Traditions Cremation and Funeral Chapel.



Drier, Christopher John

Oct 22, 1991 - Apr 1, 2021

Christopher John Drier, 29, of Sarasota, FL, died on Apr 1, 2021. Funeral arrangements by: Your Traditions Cremation and Funeral Chapel.



Beverly, Mary K.

Jul 29, 1964 - Apr 6, 2021

Mary K. Beverly, 56, of Ellenton, FL, died on Apr 6, 2021. Funeral arrangements by: Shannon Funeral Homes Town Chapel. www.shannonfuneralhomes.com



Silvius, Aaron

Jun 3, 1988 - Mar 25, 2021

Aaron Silvius, 32, of Bradenton, Florida, died on Mar 25, 2021. Funeral arrangements by: Baldwin Brothers Funeral & Cremation Society www.baldwincremation.com

Kurtz, Kathryn C.

Aug 14, 1923 - Apr 4, 2021

Kathryn C. Kurtz, 97, of Sarasota, Florida, died on Apr 4, 2021. Funeral arrangements by: National Cremation and Burial Society of Sarasota. Interment will take place at a later date in Duck Springs, Alabama.

Reid, Therese

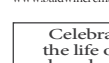
Jul 15, 1935 - Mar 28, 2021

Therese Reid, 85, of Sarasota, FL, died on Mar 28, 2021. Services will be held at 9:30AM on April 27, 2021 at St. Thomas More Catholic Church of Sarasota.

Meaney, Joseph William

Jul 03, 1938 - Apr 5, 2021

Joseph William Meaney, 82, of Nokomis, Florida, died on Apr 5, 2021. Funeral arrangements by: Baldwin Brothers Funeral & Cremation www.baldwincremation.com



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